# CHAPTER 3

## FROM MONOCULTURE TO MULTICULTURE: THE RESPONSE OF AUSTRALIAN MUSEUMS TO MULTICULTURALISM

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### INTRODUCTION

Although some countries have recognised cultural differences within their borders — Canada with its bilingual cultural policy and New Zealand with a bicultural policy based on the Treaty of Waitangi — Australia is one of the few countries to adopt a policy of multiculturalism to reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of its population. This diversity is evident in an analysis of the population mix. Currently, about one in four of the population is of mixed Anglo-Celtic or non-Anglo-Celtic descent. Extensive inter-marrying has resulted in 10% of third and later-generation Australians having a single ethnic origin; about 30% having two origins; 40% with three or four; and 20% having five or more (Alomes & Jones, 1991: 418).

Abandonment of the White Australia policy in 1973 signalled a shift from the long-maintained policies of exclusion to multiculturalism. This, and earlier changes to government policy and immigration programs, have been tied to the historical processes of migration, the needs of a national economy, and socio-political pressures. In the 30 year period following World War II Australia experienced a period of mass migration which was driven by rapid expansion and structural changes in the economy. It was promoted through a government program of large-scale labour immigration under an assistance scheme. Although the government had promised that all assisted migrants would be Caucasian and most of British origin, a downturn in people wishing to migrate from those countries meant the scheme had to turn to other sources. Increasingly migrants were sought from Southern Europe then the Middle East and finally Asian countries. Newcomers were expected to adopt the language, customs and beliefs of mainstream Australians and to merge into the community. By the early 1970s a more conservative approach to immigration was being adopted. Initially moderate reductions were placed on immigrant targets and in the mid 1970s targets were dramatically pruned. These policy changes were the result of changing origins of migrant flows, population pressure, economic inflation, unemployment and public attitudes and criticism of assimilationist policy.

As a precursor to multicultural policy, Jerzy Zubrzycki argued in 1968 for cultural diversity through the maintenance of migrant languages. In 1973 Al Grasby presented a paper, *A Multicultural Society for the Future*, in which he argued against assimilation and for retaining, and respecting, the cultures and customs of migrants. The Fraser government continued the momentum initiated by the Whitlam government with the establishment of an advisory body on multiculturalism — the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council. In 1977 it published *Australia as a Multicultural Society* which finally gave official recognition to multiculturalism. The following year, the Galbally Report on migrant welfare services appeared. This stressed the importance of maintaining ethnic cultures and confirmed a commitment to multiculturalism. In 1980, the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs was set up to develop public understanding of diverse cultures within Australia. Successive governments have affirmed this commitment to multiculturalism. Numerous landmark reports in the late 1980s and early 1990s demonstrated stronger government interest in promoting multiculturalism. These included a report on Folklife in Australia (1987), proceedings from a conference of museums, libraries, archives and historical collecting bodies on multiculturalism (1989), a report from the Office of Multicultural Affairs urging protection of cultural property of all Australians (1989), guidelines to encourage collecting institutions to become more reflective of cultural diversity (1991) and, in 1993, report from the Office of Multicultural Affairs promoting multicultural training in cultural institutions.

As government policies have changed as to who could and should be Australian citizens, so has the government's concept of Australian culture changed from mono-culturalist to multiculturalist. The concept of citizenship has also broadened from enfranchisement to incorporate social justice and cultural rights. As a result, museums and other collecting institutions are now being asked to represent this plurality. The extent of the response may mean the difference

between tokenism and creating a more empowering and culturally diverse environment.

These changes in government policy have implications for museumpolicies and practices. Under a multicultural model, the national culture includes multiple threads that enter at different periods and stretch back to different origins that may be, culturally complex. The following quotations illustrate the complexity of multiculturalism which museums need to address.

First, the *National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia* defines the term from a political perspective:

> The Commonwealth Government has identified three dimensions of multicultural policy:
>
> - cultural identity: the right of all Australians within carefully defined limits to express and share their individual cultural heritage including their language and religion;
>
> - social justice: the right of all Australians to equality of treatment and opportunity, and the removal of barriers of race, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender or place of birth; and
>
> - economic efficiency: the need to maintain develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background.

The *Agenda* also notes certain limits to Australian multiculturalism:

> - multicultural policies are based on the premise that all Australians should have an overriding and unifying commitment to Australia, to its interests and future first and foremost;
>
> - multicultural policies require all Australians to accept the basic structures and principles of Australian society — the Constitution and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language and equality of the sexes; and
>
> - multicultural policies impose obligations as well as conferring rights: the right to express one's own culture and beliefs involves a reciprocal responsibility to accept the right of others to express their views and values. (Office of Multicultural Affairs, 1989).

The definition adopted by the Federation of Ethnic Councils of Australia (FECCA) is more visionary in tone:

> The Federation defines a multicultural society as one in which a variety of different cultural groups co-exist harmoniously, free to maintain their distinctive religions, linguistic or social customs, equal as individuals in their access to resources and services appropriate to them and their needs, to civil and political rights, and sharing with the rest of society particular concerns and values. There would be diversity, equality and empathy of interaction. All of the groups would stress tolerance of cultural, linguistic and religious differences which would be complementary to the loyalties the individual shares with other Australians and

which forms his/her identity as an Australian in the Australian ethos. (Gardini & Skardoon, 1985).

A more theoretically informed definition of a multicultural society is proposed by Ivan Karp:

> Every society can be seen as a constantly changing mosaic of multiple communities and organisations. Individual identities and experiences never derive entirely from single segments of society — from merely one of the communities out of which the complex and changing social order is made. An individual can in the space of a short time move from emphasising the part of his or her identity that comes from membership in an ethnic community to highlighting his or her participation in a formal organisation such as a professional society and then back to being an ethnic-community member again We experience these identities not as all-encompassing entities but through specific social events: encounters and social settings where identities are made relevant by the people participating the them. Communities are often thought of as things and given thinglike names such as "the Irish", "the blacks", "the Jews", "the WASPs". But they are actually experienced as encounters in which cultures, identities, and skills are acquired and used. These settings can involve communal groups as small and intimate as the nuclear family or as large and institutional as the convention of a professional society. People form their primary attachments and learn to be members of society in these settings, which can be referred to collectively as the institutions of civil society. (Karp, 1992: 3-4).

## MUSEUM REPRESENTATIONS OF ETHNICITY

The Pigott report, in arguing for a Museum of Australia to depict the history of man and nature in Australia, noted that a major pavilion devoted to the history of Europeans in Australia was warranted on the grounds that State museums had not been able to satisfy a quickening public interest in our recent history and that 'so far no museum in Australia has attempted, even on a moderate scale, to depict the history of Australia since the coming of the British' (Commonwealth of Australia, 1975: 12.9). Museums have, until recent years, paid scant attention to Australian history, so there is limited representation in museums of ethnic peoples and their cultures. Further, their inclusion in museum exhibitions has been hindered by policies and practices that make a migrant presence invisible, or project stereotyped images of migrants in Australia.

### INVISIBILITY OF ETHNIC PEOPLE IN MUSEUMS

In the last decade, with broader community debate about multiculturalism, museums have started to recognise the historical neglect of ethnic populations, and various ways of addressing this issue are now being put into place in some museums. This under representation of ethnic

culture from our museums can be seen as a consequence of a number of factors.

*Cultural Dominance of Anglo-Celtic People.* One outcome of a dominant Anglo-Celtic population and culture was the marginalisation of ethnicity and of migrant experiences. This is particularly evident in museums. As these institutions slowly built up their history collections, Anglocentric perspectives were carried over, partly due to the prevailing concerns of historians who tended to focus on themes of politics, labour movements and industrial development and partly due to assumptions in the wider community that Australia was, and has remained, 'British'.

Even within the local museum movement which accelerated from the late 1960s, boomed in the 1970s and reached a frenetic pitch by 1988, the focus has largely been on depicting the history of Anglo-Celtic Australians. These museums have tended to ignore or gloss over evidence of ethnic origins or input of other cultural values into the social environment. Gail Griffith suggested this is a result of local historical work being: a) divorced from academic work, b) linked to a chauvinistic form of Australian nationalism that was formulated within a framework of British Imperial allegiances, c) highly selective, and d) having a tendency to rely on sources that are themselves biased (Griffith, 1989: 104-109).

*Assimilationist Philosophies.* Government policies and public attitudes encouraged migrants to blend into the mainstream of Australian society or pushed them into isolated communities. As A.G. Beazly, a cabinet member in the Chifley government, put it:

> Australia will seek migrants *of our own kind who could be readily assimilated* and who believe in the standards of living we have struggled to achieve. (Castles et al., 1988: 49) [emphasis added].

Migrants were expected to become 'substantially Australian in the first generation and completely Australian in the second generation' (Billy Snedden, quoted in Castles et al., 1988: 52). It was assumed this was achievable by immigrants acquiring English language skills and being dispersed throughout, and intermingling with, the host society. In accordance with these conceptions, museums were thought of as places where migrants might learn Australian values rather than as places where they might find their own values reflected or a dialogue of different values.

*Hidden Histories.* The reasons why people decide to immigrate are many and varied ranging from personal to national events. Personal decisions may be lost over generations as people often wish to bury negative aspects of the migrant experience — failure in the 'home' country, traumas of poverty and loneliness, or ordeals of racism, discrimination, or even conflict in the 'host' country. Amplifying this tendency to a 'hidden' past for migrant people is the fact that events overseas have been given little space within Australian history.

Even our military and maritime museums, where one might expect to find evidence of overseas connections, have tended to remain silent on such topics. The Australian War Memorial, although its major displays are dedicated to battle theatres overseas, remains Australian-centred with its commitment to recording the experiences of Australian service men and women serving, fighting, and dying, in the nation's wars. A modification to the War Memorial's initial brief has extended this to include the causes and aftermath of war so, in principle, the legislation allows for the Museum to present displays that embrace the social and political history of the wars in which Australians have been involved. However, changes in displays to incorporate these themes have been slow to appear. Similarly, our maritime museums have focused their attentions on Australia by exhibiting ships and artefacts associated with the history of commercial shipping and shipbuilding, dealing with naval matters, and, in recent years, developing displays devoted to maritime archaeology. The National Maritime Museum, takes an approach to maritime history which includes people who live and work around the sea and who travel across it. It opens the way for a more expansive interpretation of maritime museums; one that might incorporate social aspects of maritime life and migration.

*A Deficit of History.* Until recently there has been a paucity of research into the demographic and social history of immigrants. This is especially so for those involved in mass migration, chain migration or refugee entry. For example, when planning an exhibition on Greek-Australians, Leonard Janiszeski and Effy Alexakis noted, when they came to collect material, that much of what had been gathered to date related either to the upper strata of immigrant groups and to prominent organisations, or was restricted to limited topics and periods. In effect:

> No collection that we investigated provided a substantial volume of material which ably cut across most social levels of the Greek community in Australia, or was in possession of a considerable degree of historical depth, particularly before 1900. (Janiszeski & Alexakis, 1989: 31)

Another national group which has had considerable impact on Australian life — its economy, its landscape, and its social relations — has been the Chinese. The Chinese gold miners, market gardeners, apothecaries, rural workers etc. who cleared the land, worked the goldfields and who have contributed to the creation of wealth, and health, have received scant historical recognition and even less representation in museums outside Chinese community collections.

### STEREOTYPICAL IMAGES

*Ethnicity.* Where elements of an ethnic past are included in displays and exhibitions there is a strong tendency to stereotypical images. Again Janiszeski & Alexakis comment on this tendency in relation to Greek-Australians: ' ... an urban stereotype of the Greek fish-and-chip shop owner or cafe proprietor, or the folkloric stereotype of Greek festivals and dancers in traditional costume, predominates' (Janiszeski & Alexakis, 1989). Stereotypical images such as these tend to be constructed around traditional 'folk' images or a concentration on ethnic 'types' and popular associations of particular groups with certain occupations. This focus on the 'folk' elements of ethnic cultures can evoke sentimentality and nostalgia rather than encourage understanding or provide information. Without denigrating traditional cultural rituals and festivals, a more comprehensive picture would include these as part of a total migrant experience — as part of everyday life, as ways in which traditions have been kept alive as well as ways in which old practices have been modified: such a picture might reveal what has been lost, what retained and why.

Typical representations that associate particular ethnic groups with certain activities and occupations is another form of stereotyping. Greek people are traditionally associated with cafe life, the Chinese with laundry work. Researching different lives, or even looking at reasons for concentrations of particular migrant groups within specific occupations would not only enable a better appreciation of the migrant experience but could also reveal more about Australians and the Australian 'way of life'. That museums have continued to represent ethnic peoples in these traditional ways is described by Amareswar Galla, as the perpetuation of a 'colonial sociology'. It is, he argues, a 'tyranny of stereotypes', which may be defined in terms of dichotomies or binary oppositions. As Galla puts it:

These are presented in terms of us and them; black and white; Anglo and 'ethnic'; primitive and civilised, literate and illiterate; oriental and occidental; and more recently Asian and European (Galla, 1993: 2).

*Ignoring Diversity.* Ethnic stereotyping is often a result of a failure to recognise difference (linguistic, regional, generational, religious etc) within ethnic groups. One of the most disparate, but also one of the most unified ethnic groups in Australia is the Jewish community whose members have been arriving in Australia since 1788 from all around the world and represent a mixture of linguistic groups and socio-economic strata. Descendants of German Lutherans who came to South Australia in the 1830s to escape religious persecution and ' ... found settlements wherein they could realise the ancient peasant virtues of industry and thrift' (Price, 1957, quoted in Zubrzycki, 1992) would have little in common with more recent German migrants — in particular, post-war assisted German migrants coming from wartorn urban backgrounds looking for refuge, work and wealth in industrialised centres.

### COLLECTING AND OTHER MUSEUM PRACTICES

These constraints that inhibit museums from providing adequate representations of non Anglo-Celtic citizens mean that museums have not collected widely in the area. At the same time, there are problems in the area of collecting that have their own impact on the extent and type of ethnic material culture which museums display. Locating appropriate material culture, then identifying and documenting the associated history is often difficult for museums. Further, collecting criteria, the conflicting agendas of museums and ethnic communities, as well as social and cultural differences, can challenge museums to meet a multicultural agenda.

*Collections.* Existing holdings are often biased to Anglo-Celtic culture and limited in respect to material on migration due to

1, The bulk of collections having been built up in the nineteenth century;

2, A late start to multicultural collecting with only a limited number of museums now establishing collection policies in this area;

3, Scarcity of material available in this area due to the migration process itself (refugees mostly arrive with no possessions, others often can only bring the bare essentials), as well as distrust of museums by ethnic peoples. As Viv Szekeres, Director of the Migration Museum in South Australia relates, it has taken time and effort to nurture the trust of ethnic communities to such an extent that individuals are willing to donate, or lend, objects (Szekeres, 1989: 74);

4, Undervaluing the multicultural past by both host and immigrant cultures for various reasons. Assimilationist philosophies, the trauma of leaving home, and a concentration on future and self-improvement which sees artefacts representative of 'old' ways being discarded as families became upwardly mobile and wish to conform, fit in, or blend into the wider society, can all contribute to devaluing ethnic pasts; and

5, Poor documenting of much ethnic material culture.

*Forms of Address.* Museum displays, public programs and outreach activities are most frequently directed to English speakers. Display texts are almost always in English. Further, museum practices that follow traditional labelling styles which either omit or are slim on social and historical contextualisation can delimit ethnicity. Anthropological sections overtly address non-indigenous audiences and present these cultures from a Eurocentric academic perspective. As a Samoan speaker told a Review panel for the Queensland Museum,

> ... there is some history of the Pacific Islands in the Queensland Museum but we (the Samoan community of Brisbane) would like to be recognised and become involved (Queensland Museum Policy Review, 1993, Public submission).

*Conflicting Agendas.* Conflict may emerge between the objectives of museums and those of ethnic communities. Ethnic organisations are mostly concerned with representing their histories in positive, non-conflictive and celebratory terms. Museums, by contrast, might be concerned with raising questions about the past, airing controversial issues, and exploring conflictive relationships such as racism, discrimination and alienation. As the governing body of the Italian Historical Society expresses it, the organisation has 'sought to be a place of consensus where political divisiveness was discouraged' but one which would 'always reflect a full cross-section of views in the Italian community' (Co-As-It Italian Assistance Association Annual Report, 1993). In contrast, Szekeres has noted that displays at the Migration Museum, in focusing on the experiences of migrants,

> ... are therefore critical of government policy in which immigration schemes have been biased towards British English-speaking migrants and government policy has been openly racist' (Szekeres, 1989: 74).

Margaret Anderson, too, has pointed out that it is 'easy' to portray the 'contribution' of different cultures to Australian life but much more difficult to

delve deeper into the less positive aspects of immigration history ... to present any sort of balanced picture (Anderson, 1987:109).

Differing agendas have also been long established within Australian museums in respect to their holdings of material culture of non-English speaking societies. Much of this has been collected, displayed and interpreted as examples of other cultures and not as part of Australian history and culture. Consequently the emphasis has been on aesthetic or functional qualities, not on the social meanings of such objects.

At another level, as the Bicentennial Historic Records Search revealed, much of the material culture of Australians of non-English speaking backgrounds is privately held — in homes or community collections. The significance of this material may lie in familial or community values and the individual objects may be regarded as everyday items of common usage, as treasured family heirlooms, or as symbols of a different cultural background. Dr Judith Winternitz, who carried out a survey of this 'hidden heritage', raises a number of ethical questions about the role of major Australian heritage institutions — questions to which she does not provide answers but which reveal the sensitive nature of collecting in the realm of the personal, the social, and the cultural:

> To what extent should major Australian heritage institutions such as State museums and galleries be encouraged to go out and actively solicit or collect such 'hidden heritage' items? How should they go about this ethically? Is it possible to combine formal methods of correct documentation and display in institutions with a sensitivity toward the community's or individual's connection to and interpretation of items? Does accessibility to the general public and the educative value of a broader presentation of Australian heritage in formal collections make up for the remoteness imposed on objects once they are removed from every day life and placed in a museum context? (Winternitz, 1990: xi-xiii).

*Social Barriers.* Many migrants (especially first generation) are identified as working-class with inherent collection problems associated with this class. Working-class material culture such as clothing, furniture and tools, are often 'worked' to death and accorded lowly status compared to prestigious artefacts lovingly preserved in more affluent homes. Further, with the tendency for 'cultural carers' to be women, 'ethnic' culture (material and non-material) can become associated with the women's sphere and as a consequence be subjected to the traditional museum treatment of women's matters. Even generational differences within communities may provoke opposing views on the migration experience. Many

oral historians note that older people are reluctant to talk about unhappy pasts or discuss experiences of racism or conflict. But for others, the process can be cathartic, even empowering.

*Cultural Barriers.* Religious sanctions, socioreligious taboos on rituals, life-cycle events and fear of political pressure on kith and kin at home, even inter-racial conflict, can discourage immigrants from discussing their experiences and consequently thwart museum collecting programs or research projects. As Szekeres recounts, one community was prohibited by its leaders from exhibiting in the Migration Museum because the Museum held artefacts from a country with which the community had a long-standing dispute (Szekeres, 1992: 21).

Concern about whether museums will respect particular cultural and religious views presents a further barrier to museum activities in this area. Viv Szekeres has written about a gift of a Chinese effigy of the Goddess of Mercy which was offered to the Migration Museum. But, according to tradition, this very beautiful work should be ceremonially burnt in order to 'arrest delinquent ghosts'. In this situation, the Museum, in consultation with the South Australian Chinese community, accepted the gift, displayed it for a period and then, at the appropriate date, re-enacted the ritual burning in accord with Chinese custom, even though such an action was in contradiction of the Western traditional museum mandate to preserve cultural objects (Szekeres, 1989: 76).

EMPLOYMENT

Given the statistics of ethnic influences in the population, employment data on museums suggest bias toward Anglo-Celtic staff in these institutions. This is confirmed by comments in *A Plan for Cultural Heritage Institutions to Reflect Australia's Cultural Diversity* (DASETT, 1991), which notes that Australia's collecting institutions have tended to be staffed primarily by immigrants from Britain and Ireland and their descendants. The result is a bias in both museum collections and activities that is unrepresentative of Australia's cultural diversity. The Plan calls for collecting institutions to consider recruitment of employees and volunteers with linguistic and/or cross-cultural awareness skills, and recruitment of volunteer guides drawn from a 'wide range of community groups' (DASETT, 1991: 18).

> The agencies which determine cultural support [in Australia] are largely controlled by the Anglo-Australian majority, many of whom accept notions of Australian identity which exclude the minorities. (Jupp, 1991:13)

Galla argued that multicultural issues in museums should be addressed through internal policies. Affirmative action in human resource development programs that cover all institutional operations is required — not merely the token appointment of 'a few designated staff'. He suggests that a multicultural agenda should be an integral part of the mission statement of collecting institutions (Galla, 1993: 17-33).

*Lack of Data.* As with women, there has been a paucity of published data in respect to employment and this is only now being addressed through EEO legislation and reporting procedures. However, an added problem is the question of reporting. Self-reporting oneself as 'ethnic' in a work environment may be seen as unnecessary or even disadvantageous. Self-reporting of 'ethnicity' for EEO requirements is on a voluntary basis and, as the Director of one museum indicated, there were some among his staff who did not wish to be identified with the EEO target group of non-English speaking background.

In 1992-1993 only the Australian Museum, the Powerhouse Museum, and the Australian War Memorial provided details of employees of non-English speaking background (NESB) in their EEO reports. The Australian Museum employed 36 NESB people in a total staff of 278 (12.9%), with 16 of these in the two lowest categories (Clerical Officers Grade 1 and below), 4 employed as Administrative and Clerical staff Grades 1-2 and 12 in Grades 3-5. At the Powerhouse the corresponding figures were 77 NESB staff out of a total of 389 (19.8%), with 10 found at below Clerical Officer Grade 1, 38 at Grades 1-3, and 36 classified at Administrative and Clerical Grades 1-2. At the Australian War Memorial, NESB staff comprise 7.9% of the 205 staff.

*Career Development.* Career opportunities and decision-making opportunities for people of non-English speaking background are often limited in museum administration due to: 1) white, Anglo-Celtic males dominating executive officer levels; and/or, 2) political/bureaucratic systems rejecting overseas qualifications and experiences.

As figures from the Australia Council indicate, there are only 640 curators, researchers and registrars in professionally managed museums. Most are located in large urban centres and they form part of an elite professional group.

> They are all late twentieth century Australians, mostly Anglo-Celtic in origins, almost without exception tertiary educated in a similar cultural milieu, overwhelmingly urban and their age range spans no more than about 25 years (Jones, 1992: 25).

## NEW DIRECTIONS

With cultural pluralism now on the agendas of governments, museums are beginning to address the question of multiculturalism and the representation of cultural diversity. This new direction is a product of government policies, a more reflective approach from museum administrators, and new practices in response to on-going pressure from community groups.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Specific strategies for collecting institutions have been developed as a consequence of various initiatives. Some of these key initiatives have been:

*1987. Release of 'Folklife: Our Living Heritage'.* This report covered the findings of the Committee of Inquiry into Folklife in Australia which was set up in 1986 to review ways of ensuring that traditions of Australia's rich, multicultural society were identified, documented and their survival within communities promoted as part of Australia's evolving cultural heritage. The Report recommended a Folklife Centre, Grants Scheme, a National Collection program, Folk Arts Committee and a program of Folk Arts Grants. To date the government has not acted on this report, although independent action has seen a Trust established.

*1989. 'New Responsibilities: Documenting Multicultural Australia'.* In 1988 a conference was convened by the Victorian Branch of the Museums Association of Australia for Museums, Libraries, Archives and Historical Collections to discuss multiculturalism. A set of recommendations was addressed to Commonwealth, State and local government covering funding, research, cultural collecting institutions, and training.

*1989. 'National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia: Sharing our Future'.* This report from the Office of Multicultural Affairs recognised a need to protect the cultural heritage of different ethnic groups. It defined multiculturalism as a policy for managing the consequences of cultural diversity in the interests of the individual and of society as a whole, and identified its dimensions in terms of cultural identity, social justice and economic efficiency whilst also noting the limitations to multiculturalism. The report encouraged libraries, museums and similar bodies to develop their collections to reflect Australia's diversity.

*1991. 'A Plan for Cultural Heritage Institutions to Reflect Australia's Cultural Diversity'*

*(DASETT).* An initiative of the 1988 conference and the 1989 National Agenda was formulation of a plan to encourage museums and libraries to reflect, in collections and practices, the cultural diversity of the Australian people. Specific measures advocated included: 1) Collection of material to reflect the heritage of all Australians; 2) Access to heritage material so that the cultural traditions of all Australians are maintained and shared and become part of Australian life; 3) Representation on management bodies; 4) Collection and display of materials in a 'Language Other than English' (LOTE); and 5) Consultation between community groups and collecting institutions.

These objectives were to be implemented by the Cultural Ministers Council which was to play a co-ordinating role and provide a policy and funding framework that would encourage collecting institutions to reflect cultural diversity. Changing attitudes and perceptions of libraries, art museums and museums was seen as fundamental to the objectives of the plan and, to this end they were urged to analyse the cultural and linguistic compositions of their catchment areas in order to develop appropriate collections and programs, and to also re-assess existing collections and programs to determine relevance to their particular community, so as to identify gaps and deficiencies.

*1993. 'Training as Access: Guidelines for the Development of Heritage Curricula and Cultural Diversity'.* This report prepared by Dr Galla and published by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, proposed guidelines for cross-cultural heritage education and training for the museum sector. Among its recommendations the Report proposed an Academy to promote cultural pluralism in institutions managing cultural heritage; the development by tertiary institutions of academic units incorporating policies and practices in indigenous and multicultural Australia, as well as courses in general museology

> to provide an opportunity for all students to enhance their general museum consciousness irrespective of cultural or disciplinary backgrounds

and that a national framework be developed to enable heritage institutions to implement the *Plan for Cultural Heritage Institutions.*

INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES

Strategies within museums to incorporate a multicultural agenda revolve largely around providing access to wider audiences, acknow-

tive techniques that avoid the 'twin sins' of invisibility and stereotyping by:

1, Individuated displays: Instead of relying on characterisations that conform to popular images, some museums and exhibitions are focussing on individual stories. The touring exhibition, *Mum Stayed Home: Women in the 50s*, tells of the lives of four women from different backgrounds, including that of Els Jacobs, who migrated from Holland in 1955. Similarly, at the Sydney Jewish Museum, it is the personal accounts — written, recorded, or videoed — of Holocaust survivors that give impact, and poignancy, to the displays.

2, Telling the whole story: To avoid a celebratory or nostalgic tone to migrant stories, museums need to look at the whole migrant experience: from the transplantation of individuals to their cultural values and institutions; the responses of the dominant Anglo-Celtic majority to the ethnic presence; and the minutiae of daily life both in the home and in the workplace. Many migrant experiences (past and present) are not happy ones and museums need to have courage to tackle issues of racism, intolerance, poverty, exploitation, failure and pain associated with leaving home and trying to make a living in a new country that can be unwelcoming, even hostile.

> ... if we examine the experiences of being a migrant in Australia, it was at best disorienting, but much more often it was a traumatic and alienating experience. When we tell this story at the Migration Museum, our visitors do not emerge happy. Mostly they're discomforted and often quite angry. They say things like, "We just had no idea!" ... Museums must continue to present displays not only which inform a public which doesn't know, but also present displays which enable people to identify their own experiences and see them given recognition (Szekeres, 1989: 78).

3, Dynamic culture: Multiculturalism in Australia does not represent 'pure' ethnic cultures. Some museums endeavour to show how the ethnic experience is built upon layers of experiences brought to Australia, lived here, and adapted and modified by the Australian experience. Such a layering of cultures was depicted in the exhibition at the Museum of Victoria (1993-4), *Bridging Two Worlds: Jews, Italians and Carlton*, which brought together two of the cultural groups who have populated Carlton since the turn of the century. Both Jewish and Italian settlers had their own patterns of migration and regional origins but in overcrowded early Carlton social conditions meant 'neighbourliness was a necessity'. Yet tradition and adaption were also shown to be part of the migrant life. Migrants set up in traditional occupations (Kosher butchering, Jewish and Italian grocery shops, special bookshops,

etc.) or settled into labouring or factory jobs in the 'outside' world.

4, Cultural institutions: By looking at the ways in which cultural practices are transplanted from overseas — beliefs and religious kinship system, for example — museums can more adequately depict the migration process.

> The process of the transplantation of the major social institutions and their gradual change and adjustment to the cultural norms of the receiving society has been an outstanding characteristic of Australia's migration experience and the central issue of the country's history (Zubrzycki, 1992: 10).

The exhibition, 'Bridging Two Worlds' also illustrated this point. The strength of religious and cultural life in Carlton was shown in the number of organisations, both Italian and Jewish, which the Carlton area has supported over the years.

*Collections.* There are differing views regarding the types of collection acquisition and management policies that will best serve multiculturalism. One argument supports an inclusive approach which maintains that ethnic material should be incorporated into mainstream collections to avoid 'ghettoisation' and the collection of material purely for ethnic displays. A development of this argument is that ethnic material, when collected separately, should be cross referenced to gender, sexuality, disability etc (Fussell, 1991). Conversely, Suzy Coleman has argued against ethnic material being included in mainstream acquisition policies on the grounds that curators of monocultural, monolingual backgrounds generally do not have the tools to deal with the complexities of multiculturalism. She argues that curators need policies that draw communities into their institutions to monitor and assist in collecting non Anglo-Celtic material (Coleman, 1989: 85-91).

Acquisition policies around the theme of multiculturalism are now being developed by some museums. This is true of the National Museum of Australia, the Museum of Victoria, the Western Australian Museum and the Powerhouse Museum (Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences), and the Migration Museum. Their policy statements suggest a synthesis of these two collecting philosophies. At the National Museum of Australia, Professor Jerzy Zubrzycki's proposal warns against the danger of presenting a 'uni-dimensional stereotype of the ethnic minority groups' that can result from displaying objects of a particular culture without reference to the influence of the receiving society, and advocates instead a 'multi-dimensional presentation of the totality of human experience that can be sub-

sumed under ethnic heritage' (Zubrzycki, 1992: 34). He recommends that artefacts be classified by issues rather than by ethnic group. At the Migration Museum and the Museum of Victoria community consultation is advocated as a key factor in developing ethnic collections.

1, National Museum of Australia. Although policy documents are still being formulated, the conceptual framework for collecting and interpreting ethnic heritage as drawn up by Professor Zubrzycki has established a model appropriate to that institution. Three areas of focus are identified: Cultural background and reasons for migration; Migration and settlement experience; and Ongoing cultural influences.

This program is to be achieved by collecting in specific areas:

a) Transplanted heritage

b) Transformed heritage consisting of items made in Australia 'to duplicate or replicate material items from the culture of origin or descent, through to free flowing adaptions and hybrid forms showing the distinct influence of the Australian environment' (Winternitz, 1990) and the 'constitutional practices, customs and forms of group behaviour that perpetuate in Australia the ancestral values and norms but invariably change in the context of inter-group relations' (Zubryzcki, 1992: 15).

c) Material culture items that relate specifically to immigration experience. The emphasis here is on those items 'created by immigrants in Australia as part of their contribution to Australia's development' (Zubryzcki, 1992) as well as other items which have their origin completely in Australia but which tell us about the immigrant's life.

The selection criteria to comply with these strategies will include:

a) Items that portray or are examples of lifestyles defined by a culture, including items of folklore which demonstrate how a transplanted minority culture tries to keep its links with the official culture of its original homeland.

b) Items of material culture and documents derived from immigrant experience.

c) Items illustrative of ideas introduced by the members of a group defined in cultural terms.

d) Items pertaining to the impact of ethnic cultures on Australian society and polity.

2, The Museum of Victoria. The History Group has drawn up a comprehensive collection policy on Migration and Settlement. Its preamble states:

The Museum of Victoria recognises the importance of the history and cultural heritage of all immigrants and their descendants, and has committed itself to collecting

and documenting the history of migration and settlement. It is vital that this responsibility also be acknowledged throughout the Museum as such an approach will mitigate against marginalizing cultural diversity within the Museum's collecting, display and research programs. (Museum of Victoria Collections Policy, 1993).

The aims of this policy include reflecting the history and process of migration and settlement of all immigrant groups to Victoria; reflecting both the urban and rural contexts of this history, and the dynamics and impact of cultural diversity; the preservation and documentation of multicultural heritage; and the redressing of an imbalance or lack of emphasis on non Anglo-Celtic cultural heritage that presently exists within the Museum's collections. A pro-active thrust is articulated in the aims of: encouraging greater awareness and understanding of Victoria's multicultural heritage, using the collection to address and explore historiographical questions, and offering the collection as a resource (for staff, non-museum researchers and other collecting bodies). The collecting principles incorporate an interdisciplinary and thematic approach, a recognition that artefacts are open to a variety of interpretations, and a commitment to consultation with the broader community in relation to collection, documentation and interpretation. A focus on personalised documentation and interpretation is advocated to 'help mitigate against perceptions of immigrant communities as faceless, stereotypic or uniform enclaves' (Museum of Victorian History Group Collection Policies Migration and Settlement Collection Policy. June, 1993: 27)

3, Migration Museum. Szekercs noted how the Museum has widened its definitions of what and how that museum collects and why it collects to include personal experiences — oral history, memorabilia, photographs. The Migration Museum also uses a loan system to augment its collection building. It also takes cognisance of different cultural values placed on objects, different meanings given to objects and different life-cycles of objects. The following quote illustrates the Migration Museum's collecting philosophy and shows how it collects items that relate to individual experiences:

The work boots of an early settler from Silesia or the tablemats from flour sacks — made by a Latvian woman in a refugee camp after the Second World War and made to pass the time while she waited to hear whether she would be allowed into Australia. Another example, in the Museum's collection we have a tatty looking piece of knotted string with a St Christopher medal at one end. It doesn't look very much at all — until you are told that it helped save the life of its owner — a Polish political prisoner in a concentration camp who, in defiance of camp authority and risking

death, made and secretly kept a rosary. This string rosary came to symbolise his freedom and his deep religious conviction that he would survive, and he did. I make this point to emphasise the kind of cultural material which does become significant once we change the focus of what is of value ... we need to be constantly confronting our own prejudices and reassessing the criteria we have for judging what is of value in the light of what it can tell us. (Szekeres, 1989: 75)

Although the Museum sees itself as a repository for artefacts of many different groups, it also recognises that much of South Australia's culturally significant material is held by individuals or community groups. Accordingly, the Museum is compiling a register of privately owned cultural material (Migration Museum Policy Paper on Multiculturalism — Collections, 1991: 2).

4, Powerhouse Museum has produced an Ethnic Affairs Policy Statement and aims to 'reflect the rich cultural diversity of Australian society' through programs and services which include 'tours, demonstrations, workshops, courses, lectures, seminars, musical and theatrical performances, exhibitions, publications, film festivals and special community events'. The intent is to introduce cultures and traditions of all Australians and raise awareness of the extent and depth of cultural diversity.

5, National Maritime Museum. The preliminary collections policy (1985) proposed that the collecting themes cover: Ships and the Sea; Aboriginal and Islander Life on the Coast and Rivers; Immigration and Settlement 1788 to 1988; The Royal Australian Navy; The Everyday Life of Sailors; The Discovery and Exploration of Australia; Living and Working in a Port; Australian Maritime Industries; Maritime Administration; Sport and Recreation; The Economics of the Sea.

Since then, the collections strategy has been refined to be more open ended, thematically flexible and allow for long-term strategy for development of the national maritime collection. The current focus areas with an explicit multicultural orientation are:

Colonial Exploration. This encompasses discovery and exploration of the Australian continent prior to European settlement in 1788, subsequent charting and initial settlement (1788-1901), and includes both European and Asian discovery and exploration in its scope.

Merchant and Commercial Services. Encompasses three major areas of Australian history from 1788: passenger travel, the trade and transport of goods, and industries which have harvested or mined the oceans and inland waterways. *The collection area relating to passenger travel in presents an opportunity to collect and exhibit material relating to maritime experiences which are*

*relevant to Australia's culturally diverse communities* [emphasis added].

Maritime Sport and Leisure. Covers the history and contemporary life of Australians in competition and recreation both on the water and on the beach (including subject areas of boating, sport, beach culture).

USA Gallery. This gallery is the result of a Bicentennial gift from the United States of America ($US Five million) for the establishment of a permanent gallery to commemorate Australian-US maritime history. The gallery covers the historic material which reflects the common development of the two nations and their maritime connections in commerce, culture, *immigration*, exploration, technology, defence, sport and maritime science [emphasis added].

One of the priorities of the Museum's collecting principles is that the collection 'will reflect a culturally diverse community and will represent the gender, age and geographical spread across Australia and its Territories' (National Maritime Museum, Collection Development Policy, 1993-1998).

*Public Programs.* The arrangement of public programs has become one of the most frequently adopted strategies for incorporating ethnic communities into museums. It is a trend already in place in many major museums, or being put into place in others. Public programs that incorporate performance (song, dance, theatre), public displays of crafts and craft workers, and lectures, and workshops also have potential to draw in large attendances from the wider community to experience different cultural expressions. Although many communities participate in these programs on a volunteer basis to display their culture to broader audiences, such programs can be very labour intensive and expensive to mount and promote.

*Museums as Advocates.* Some museums are coming to see themselves as sites for promoting social change. In respect to multiculturalism, some of their tactics include:

1, Facilitation. Museum staff may see themselves as facilitators who:

- enable empowerment of minority groups — 'a museum can help empower people to discover more about themselves and learn skills that have been traditionally the province of professional museologists and historians' (Szekeres, 1991: 211);

- restore, rejuvenate and/or maintain pride in ethnic cultures;

- re-affirm the cultural values of groups outside mainstream culture.

One of the aims of the Migration Museum is to present the experience of migrants from the migrants' position so that they are able to identify

with the displays and feel their own experiences are validated (Brief for Migration Museum). And, as the Adelaide Lithuanian Museum and Archives introductory booklet claims, museums such as theirs, are places which can provide a community with a sense of pride, serve as links with homelands, and enable a community to display its achievements to itself and the wider community.

2, Community Liaison. Museum liaison with ethnic communities and the development of a dialogue with individuals and groups is increasingly being implemented. In Australia, The Migration Museum has led the way in strengthening museum/community relations with direct community participation in the form of advice, oral history interviews and short-term loan of artefacts, as well as primary research programs. Similarly the Museum of Victoria's partnership agreements described below exemplify a shift towards the 'dialogic' museum described by John Kuo Wei Tchen in his account of the The Chinatown History Museum, New York (a museum which has directed its efforts to reclaiming the history of the oldest Chinese settlement in the United States and to exploring the roles of Chinese, non-Chinese New Yorkers and tourists in the area through a dialogue between museum and community groups).

3, Advocates of Cultural Rights. Although the concept of advocacy is new to Australian museums, the argument that museums should be advocates of cultural rights is increasingly being promoted. As Marily Opperman told the *New Images* Conference, there is a need 'to develop the role of museums as advocates of cultural rights and as important cultural vehicles for the delivery of community relation strategies' and for museums 'to act as resource institutions ... to facilitate community cultural education about Australians affected by prevailing stereotypes' (Opperman, 1994: 97). Elsewhere a number of museums have demonstrated a greater propensity to radicalism, in particular in the United States. Fath Davis Ruffins has written of the rise of black museums in the States against a background of, and in response to, civil rights movements.

> After 1950 scores of museums were founded in urban Black communities, mostly as freestanding entities not part of a church, school or any pre-existing Black institution. Often these new museums were founded by community activists who had worked in the civil rights movement at some level and now wanted to use that expertise for a cultural agenda. This volume of museum building was unprecedented within the Black community ... The people who founded museums did so in part to make some of this political debate, progres-

sive performance style, and Pan African rhetoric available to the community at a grass-roots level. Their museums were vehicles for social change, often speaking to the wider African American community through well-established expressive cultural forms such as performances of song cycles. Black museums founded in the last 30 years are places where alternative versions of the African-American and African past can be debated and disseminated to a wider public. (Ruffins, 1992: 557, 566-567).

4, Ecomuseums. The aim of ecomuseums is to integrate museum activities into local communities and to work towards community development. Ecomuseum principles also encourage an integration of different elements within its community. Although ecomuseums have largely been a phenomenon of French and Canadian museum practice, numerous ecomuseums have been established around the globe. In Australia, some aspects of the concept of ecomuseums have been taken on board by various institutions and projects, but the first museum to fully adopt the concept has been the Living Museum of the West, Melbourne, which also identifies itself as a 'multicultural museum' serving the ethnically diverse western suburbs of Melbourne (Living Museum of the West Aims and Objectives). The region's population is about 450,000, most of which is perceived as working-class and ethnic with 36% of the population having been born overseas. It is, says Peter Haffenden,

> Probably one of the most diverse communities in Australia and the world with some families working in the one industry for generations living in the same street as recent arrivals from Vietnam and Latin America, as well as more established migrants from Europe who came in the fifties and sixties. (Haffenden, 1994: 10).

Haffenden describes the Museum's first project — an exhibition celebrating the ordinary people of the region — as the product of an atypical team of museum workers or history researchers.

> Ages ranged from 17 years to 57 and included Italians, Greeks, Macedonians and Vietnamese fresh off the boat who had little English. Some of the team had backgrounds in history and research skills but the work backgrounds of most were notably un-academic. There was an ex-shearer, someone had worked in a florist shop, one woman had stacked shelves as a living, another was a tuba player while yet another had been a metal worker and a couple had worked in the local abattoirs. The team chosen to some extent reflected the diverse character of the region — its multi-cultural, multi-lingual character, its diversity of culture and experience of hard times. This diversity became especially important in a museum designed to be by, and for, the people of the region. (Haffenden, 1994: 11).

This diversity, says Haffenden, has continued to be an important feature of the Museum.

5, Democratisation of Museums. In South Australia, the Migration Museum has attempted to democraticise relations between the Museum and its audiences by establishing an acquisitions committee of representative interests. The aims are: to overcome individual curator bias, to conduct primary research in the community to obtain information and make new contacts, and to make clear in displays the subjective nature of museum knowledges (Szekercs, 1989: 73-79). Other institutions are exploring partnership arrangements, community networking arrangements and access galleries to enhance access to museums by ethnic communities.

## CASE STUDIES

This section illustrates some ways in which museums are attempting to address multiculturalism. It also discusses some models that deal with multiculturalism which include culture-specific museums and partnership or co-operative arrangements between museums and community groups. Permanent or semi-permanent exhibitions are limited (except in culture-specific museums), and the predominant form of incorporating a multicultural view is through brief temporary displays, usually in consultation with community groups, and public programming. However, although major museums and some smaller museums are initiating new policies and practices, simply inviting ethnic communities into museums and offering gallery space or short-term programs does raise questions about who really benefits. As a representative of one cultural organisation expressed it, ' ... cultural specific groups often feel they are unable to access heritage and culture through mainstream collecting institutions which regularly "bait" such groups into short-term projects leaving such groups feeling "used"' (private correspondence). Successful relationships will need to be based on continuing links that provide benefits to each stakeholder.

Examples below illustrate a continuum of institutional/community relationships. A multicultural presence in museums may be broadly grouped into three: temporary displays and public programs in mainstream institutions (often in access gallery space); culture-specific museums; and migration museums. The Migration Museum in South Australia is the forerunner in Australia of this type of museum and, although its Director has described it as a culture-specific museum, it does have a broader constituency and repre-

sentative function than most museums of this type. Its relation to the State falls between the major State bodies and community managed institutions. Two new State migration museums are under consideration. The Sydney proposal is to focus on immigration to New South Wales. The Melbourne proposal is for a national museum which, it has been suggested, would be Australia's equivalent to Ellis Island in the United States.

Ruffins argued that, in a multicultural society, there is an added 'interpretive element' always present — the simultaneous interpretation of the past from both interior and exterior perspectives. Interior interpretations or narratives are those created by communities about their own experiences while external ones are produced by people outside the subject culture (Ruffins, 1992: 512). The three basic models (mainstream, culture-specific, and specific-purpose migration museums) may entail a range of relationships between the collecting body and its constituents.

### AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTIONS

#### MAINSTREAM MUSEUMS

*State Library of Victoria and Italian Historical Society. Victoria's Italians, 1900-1945* (1985) and *Australia's Italians, 1788-1988* (1988 and touring in Australia and Italy). Both exhibitions were a result of partnership arrangements between the Italian Society and State Library of Victoria. In the early 1980s concern was expressed that immigrant generations were passing away and that there was a need to preserve as much as possible while opportunities were still available. Oral history projects, photographs and miscellaneous document collecting, were part of the collection building program.

Under the terms of the partnership, the Society provided the State Library with access to community and oral history programs that resulted in personal, intimate, and well-researched contexts for donated items. The result was an emotional commitment from donors of material. Strong family involvement in the exhibition and displays, valuable feedback, and reunions enabled family memory to become community heritage and further boost collections. Although six thematic sections were included at each location and each image was accompanied by a caption and the narrative associated with the image, these were not static displays but changed their content in accordance with the locations at which the display was presented.

FIG. 1. Street scene from the exhibition *Bridging Two Worlds — Jews and Italians in Carlton.* Museum of Victoria, Melbourne. (Photo courtesy of the Museum of Victoria).

These exhibitions with the State Library brought many more people into the Library and introduced them to the Library services. The partnership benefited both organisations. It strengthened the Library collections. It enabled collection in a caring and scholarly way, and made the Library known to the Italian community. The Historical Society gained through material being taken into an internationally recognised archive, to be made available to historians and Italians around the world. The Society also benefited by gaining access to expertise, to more volunteers and supporters of its work, as well as help with the administration of its collection and its exhibition. The project also offered legitimacy, recognition, and acceptance of Italian material. Some Italians feel they are repaying a debt to the country of adoption and that inclusion of their material in an archive of national significance is symbolic of wider community recognition and can be an 'affirmation' of 'adopted citizenship'. The display produced 'an emotional equation' and has been judged one of the most popular and emotionally charged events held at

the Library in recent years (O'Brien, 1991: 212-216, and Griffiths, 1989: 63-66):

These have not been exhibitions which we at the Library dreamt up and promoted. They have been exhibitions which happened, had to happen, because people out there demanded it, because the Italian community wanted and need to testify publicly to the depth of their local, Australian heritage. The work of the Library staff has been in harnessing those outside energies, inviting them inside, and offering them both the inspirations and burdens of working within a large central institution with a great past and great visions, but not much money. (Griffiths, 1989: 65).

*Museum of Victoria, Jewish Museum of Australia and Italian Historical Society. Bridging Two Worlds: Jews, Italians and a Village Called Carlton.* This collaborative project brought together the Museum and two community institutions (the Jewish Museum of Australia and the Italian Historical Society). The purpose was to illustrate the cultural diversity of Carlton and explore multicultural issue by examining life there since 1860. The exhibition focused on Jewish and Italian communities and used the experiences of local people to consider the com-

FIG. 2. Street scene from the exhibition *Bridging Two Worlds — Jews and Italians in Carlton.* Museum of Victoria, Melbourne. (Photo courtesy of the Museum of Victoria).

plexities of the migration process and its effects on the communities involved (Figs 1-2).

> The installation is based on thematic pods and includes the re-creation of a streetscape, complemented by a multilingual soundscape of voice and song taken from the anecdotal information which has been the primary resource and research material. Exhibits are multimedia, and include tickets of passage, exemption certificates for aliens during World War II, domestic equipment, ritual objects and mementoes as well as commercial and domestic interiors, fixtures and contents. (Mather, 1992: 25).

*Powerhouse Museum. Australian Communities.* This semi-permanent display is concerned with people's stories. The fringe experiences of the Aboriginal people of La Perouse are depicted and displays record life in migrant centres, at work, and feelings about home (Fig. 3). The space also incorporates a Community Focus gallery available to community groups to relate their own stories of migration/settlement in NSW.

Although the Museum does not intend to build extensive collections in this area, it does recognise the value of the material culture of multiculturalism to the communities and acknowledges that, for it to be truly meaningful, it should and must remain in the communities: 'We do not aim to collect this material from community groups, but to help in its display in this area'. Space adjacent to the display is available for public programs which have included: shell workers from La Perouse, a Jewish jewellery artist, instrument makers, Greek needlework, films and workshops (Northy, 1989: 34-35).

Public programs are a major vehicle through which the Powerhouse meets a commitment to cultural diversity. Although too numerous to cover in detail, a sampling from the gamut of programs during 1993 suggests the breadth of the Museum's Cultural Diversity Public program. *South Pacific Stories* (which opened late 1993), was an exhibition which looked at the influence of the South Pacific cultures on Australia. It featured stories of four South Pacific Islanders who related their experiences of living away from their cultures and remaking their communities in Sydney. Films and a program of traditional crafts, music and dance accompanied this exhibition. *Traditions of Tonga* was a presentation of tradi-

FIG. 3. Re-creation of a room in a migrant hostel of the 1950s in *Australian Communities* display, The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney. (Photo courtesy of The Powerhouse Museum).

tional weaving, carving and other crafts by members of the Tongan and other communities of the region. A season of Chinese films was screened to coincide with an exhibition on Mao and the Cultural Revolution. *Spontaneous Combustion with Kooriwadjula* was a presentation of Aboriginal music, dance and storytelling, and a multimedia presentation. *We, in Australia: Images of Asian women in Australia*, dealt with the concerns, fantasies and aspirations of Asian women in Australia. There was also a performance of Chinese operas from the Chinese Cultural Revolution, and a celebration of the Chinese Moon Festival at the Sydney Observatory (part of the Powerhouse Museum). During the summer vacation, a children's program of activities that incorporated a strong multicultural theme was produced. Other activities with a multicultural emphasis included the annual hosting of a citizenship ceremony with programs to reflect Australia's diversity and provision of free interpreters in various community languages for booked tours.

*National Museum of Australia.* Although not yet built, the National Museum of Australia has started thematic collections representing the immigration experience. A guide to the collections, *Migrant Heritage*, notes that collections already 'present a reasonably adequate documentation of the immigration experience and the process of settlement of several communities categorised in terms of their points of origin'. The balance of emphasis has fallen on 'the experience of immigrants from central and eastern Europe who came to Australia after being recruited largely in the displaced persons' camps in German and Austria in the years following World War Two' (Cook & Zubrzycki, 1992).

In 1993, the National Museum also mounted a display at Old Parliament House entitled *Landmarks: People, Land and Political Change*. This was a challenging exhibition that examined issues of land ownership and use through three historical landmarks in Australian history — the Franklin Dam dispute, the recent Mabo High Court ruling that Australia was not terra nullius or unoccupied in 1788, and most importantly for the context of this chapter, the abandonment in 1973 of the White Australia Policy which had been in force from 1901 when the Common-

wealth Immigration Restriction Act was introduced. The exhibition aimed to show how these critical decisions have shaped the political landscape and the way Australians see themselves.

*Fremantle Museum. Focus on Fremantle* Opened 1991. Arranged around themes of the environment, migration, and work and leisure activities, this exhibition aims to encourage people who have not previously had a place in the museum to see it as relevant to their culture and history, a place where they will find a voice. Delroy and Eastoe note that the intent of the exhibition is:

> To broaden the range of people who will find an experience, or a story, or a 'place' in the museum, rather than to try to 'represent' every national or cultural group who ever lived, worked or arrived in Fremantle. Each person who visits the museum brings a different collection of feelings and experiences. One may respond more strongly to artefacts from a person of the same gender, class or lifestyle than to artefacts from someone of the same ethnicity. (Delroy & Eastoe: 1992: 3-5).

*Launceston. A Cultural Tapestry: A Documentation of Migrant Women's arts and Crafts in Launceston.* This was a community project with displays, workshops of women's artistic skills and creativity guided by different cultural nuances. This type of program, says Galla, represents a response to the urgent need for community-centred training that will provide for the 'preservation, continuation and management of cultural heritage within the community itself' (Galla, 1991: 27).

## CULTURE-SPECIFIC MUSEUMS

Culture-specific museums developed in Australia during the early 1980s as a result of several factors: the policy change toward multiculturalism; the realisation by ethnic communities that cultural traditions were being lost; and, a belief that mainstream museums were under-representing the ethnic contribution to Australia's history. Szekeres has argued that culture-specific museums can act as models for mainstream museums in multiculturalism:

> It is the activity of marginalised groups who raise issues and bring them to general notice thereby raising consciousness in the wider community ... culture-specific museums are well placed to challenge some traditional assumptions and practices in museums (Szekeres, 1991: 209).

The strengths of such museums include:

1, Presenting dynamic cultures. Culture-specific museums are more likely to deal with their cultures as 'living'. As Joan Rosenbaum of the Jewish Museum in New York has said, these types of museums do not see their cultural heritage 'as a relic of a dead past, but a vibrant living heritage in which art and life are not separate categories' (Rosenbaum, quoted in Szekeres, 1991: 208). Contemporary social issues and the maintenance of cultural identity often underlie the mission of culture-specific museums. Hence there is a greater attempt to link past and present by using present issues and concerns to explore the past, and vice versa.

2, Internal perspectives. Being able to present insider or internal views of migrant experiences would suggest culture-specific museums are more able to represent the totality of migrant experience. Generally these museums grow out of their communities, or are established by other institutions within the communities such as church groups, social assistance organisations, or friendly societies. As a consequence, there is a close relationship between the museum and its community that not only facilitates research and collection activities but engenders a sense of ownership and control. The stories they tell are those experienced by their own people and they become sites of ethnic identity and community pride.

3, Cross cultural awareness raising. Although culture-specific museums may be inward looking and concerned with representing the history of a specific community to its own members, most adopt a dual mission that also directs their activities to informing the wider community about the particular culture, religion, customs and rituals of that group. The improvement of relationships between the minority group and general society is a frequently stated objective of these museums. For example, The Jewish Museum of Australia aims: 'to educate the general public by acting as a window on the Jewish world, a bridge to greater understanding and an antidote to ignorance' (The Jewish Museum of Australia — Current Operations, 1992).

Culture-specific museums (other than those devoted to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander interests) established to date include: NSW – 1) the A M Rosenblum Jewish Museum, Sydney; 2) the Sydney Jewish Museum, Darlinghurst; Victoria – 3) Bendigo Chinese Association, Bendigo; 4) Italian Historical Society, Carlton; Jewish Holocaust Centre, Elsternwick; 5) Museum of Chinese Australian History, Melbourne; 6) the Jewish Museum of Australia, South Yarra; Ukranian Arts and Craft Museum, North Melbourne; SA – 7) Latvian Ethnic Museum, Brooklyn Park; Lithuanian Museum,

FIG. 4. *Changing the Landscape*, one of the displays on 19th century immigration and settlement. The Migration Museum, Adelaide. (Photo courtesy of the Migration Museum).

Glenunga; 8) Polish Museum, Sevenhill, Clare; and the Ukranian Museum, Torrens Park.

Several of these museums, and details of their activities, are reviewed below.

*Migration Museum.* Although not strictly a culture-specific museum, it has similar concerns in the collection and display of the histories and cultures of different ethnic groups. It was established in 1988 by the History Trust of South Australia to cover the social history of immigration in Australia.

Its permanent displays cover the history of immigration to, and settlement in, South Australia since 1836, as well as the history of the Museum's home (the old Destitute Asylum) and the women and children who lived there. The Museum has also mounted a number of changing displays (Figs 4-9). The following list of exhibitions reveals not only a breadth of cultural diversity (ethnic, gender and age-wise) but also a thematic richness.

*Textile Traditions.* A joint project with the Jubilee 150 Families, Religion and Cultural Communities Executive Committee, with material loaned from the communities of Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia (April - August 1986).

*Memories and Dreams.* An exhibition of banners made by different communities to represent their experience of migration and settlement (May - July 1986).

*Lace: The Labour and the Luxury.* Lacemaking as a vehicle for the historical and cultural interpretation of lacemaking as a significant craft in Europe and South Australia (August 1986 - January 1987).

*Hitleriada.* An exhibition of Polish cartoons made by Stanislaw Toegel whilst imprisoned by the Nazis during World War II (May - September 1987).

*Chapters in Childhood.* The history of childhood, contrasting experiences of children from different cultures (September 1987 - February 1988).

*Passengers from Hamburg.* The history of nineteenth century German settlement in South Australia — to celebrate 150 years of German settlement (May - November 1988).

*Strictly Black.* A display which examined the social, economic, historical, psychological and cultural reasons why people wear black (December 1988 - September 1989).

*Il Cammino Continua — The Continuing Journey.* The story of South Australian Italians (February 1990 - January 1991).

*Work it Out.* In the form of a game, this colourful exhibition introduced children to the cultural diversity that exists in South Australia (May 1991 - January 1992).

*Fair Go: Everyone a Winner — The Story of Sport in Multicultural South Australia.* The brief for this dis-

FIG. 5. *Working Lives*, another of the displays on 19th century immigration and settlement. The Migration Museum, Adelaide. (Photo courtesy of the Migration Museum).

play was to examine the role of sport and sporting clubs as significant aspects of South Australia's multicultural life and to show how sport has been involved in the process of settlement and the maintenance of cultural identity. In the process of settlement sport is presented as a vehicle for re-inforcing group norms and maintaining cultural identity; it reflects the history, tradition, cultural origins, social status, class affinity of individuals and groups; and it can demonstrate tensions between pressures to assimilate and pressures to maintain separate cultural activities (1991). (Source: MigratioNews, 1992 and Migration Museum Exhibition Brief).

*The Past is What You Keep*. A series of exhibitions about the kinds of objects that people keep. Each new display continues to examine the notation that these objects are associated with important life events and rituals (December 1994 - December 1995).

*Chops and Changes: Food Immigrants and Culture*. A exhibition in three courses. The first — From Field to Factory — explores the gathering, production, processing, and marketing of from the field to the factory; the second course — The Multicultural Market — features a number of interactive displays covering the introduction of particular foods into Australia by migrants and skills and changes to eating habits associated with these foods; and the final course — Festive Tables — deals with food and cultural identity. (April 1995 - 1996).

The Migration Museum has also hosted various national and international exhibitions that com-

plement the Museum's activities, — an exhibition of Chinese embroidery; *Greek Australians: In their own image*, a photographic and historical exhibition of Greek Australians; and a display of drawings, paintings and memorabilia from the Czechoslovakian ghetto of Theresienstadt. An additional service offered by the Museum is its database about South Australia's different cultural groups.

*Jewish Museum of Australia (Melbourne)*. Although the museum has a significant collection, largely acquired through donations, current policy is to concentrate on temporary exhibitions due to space limitations. This approach also enables the museum to present a variety of Australian Jewish experiences and to encourage repeat visits. Since opening in 1982, the Museum has presented 32 exhibitions, most developed in-house, which have covered a range of topics including:

*The Dunera Experience* (1990–1991). This exhibition covered the internment of 'enemy aliens' from overseas, many of whom were German and Austrian Jews who had fled their homelands to seek refuge in England, only to be interned there

FIG. 6. *Arrivals Board*, an interactive display in the gallery presenting immigration experiences. The display shows the reasons why people left their countries of origin and the immigration schemes under which they came to Australia. The Migration Museum, Adelaide. (Photo courtesy of the Migration Museum).

and thence 'transported' to Australia. The exhibition told the story of this experience through the memories and memorabilia of participants.

*Freud and Friends: the Jews of Vienna* (1991). This exhibition examined Freud in the context of Jewish bourgeoisie society — its religious life, literature, theatre, music. The display also included a section on 'Vienna to Australia'.

*Australian Contemporary Design in Jewish Ceremony* (1991). The purpose of this project was:

> To provide access for Australian Jews to ritual objects that express their own lives as Australian Jews, that binds them to their timeless heritage and celebrates their lives as citizens of this timeless land.

Funded partly by the Visual Arts/Crafts Board of the Australian Council, this exhibition also aimed to

> encourage the development of an indigenous Australian art, to re-educate the Jewish and general public regarding the dynamic potential for artistic reinterpretation of traditional forms; to create a new and exciting market for Australian artists (Light, 19931: 23).

*Jewish Museum of Sydney*. Although the central focus of the Museum is the Holocaust, its displays also cover Australian Jewish history (Figs 10-11).

Opened in 1992, its objectives are: to illustrate the richness of Jewish life; to tell the story of Jews in Australia; to serve as a witness to the Holocaust and as a memorial to those who perished in the Holocaust; and to articulate a message of religious and cultural tolerance. A primary role of the Museum is that of education and it is also establishing itself as a cultural centre, not only for the Jewish community but for Sydney as a whole. In summing up the first year's operation, the Director, Dr Alan Jacobs, reported that the museum had become:

> a welcome addition to Sydney's cultural life. Not only the Museum itself, but the active cultural program — seminars, films, concerts — the Museum has put on. During the year we have held many cultural events, including a piano recital by young prodigy Simon Tedeschi, a concert with American folk singer Rosalie Gerut and a play reading of *Ghetto* by Yoshua Sobol, its first performance in Australia. We have also held seminars on the Holocaust and related issues, the most important of which was a panel discussion on war crimes with those involved in the recent trial in Adelaide ... During the coming years it is my aim to re-establish the Museum as a cultural centre, not only for the Jewish community but for Sydney as a whole. My other avowed aim is to oversee the process whereby the Sydney Jewish Museum becomes a truly communal

FIG. 7. *Work it out*, an interactive game for children about cultural diversity in Australia. (A Migration Museum exhibition currently on tour around Australia). (Photo courtesy of the Migration Museum).

museum, funded and managed by the Jewish community. (Jacobs: 1994).

*Museum of Chinese Australian History.* Opened 1985. Objectives are to document and preserve the history of Australians of Chinese descent; to hold exhibitions of both local and international aspects of Chinese history and culture; and to act as a repository for a local heritage so as to give visitors a different perspective of Melbourne's multicultural society. Past exhibitions have included: *Glimpses of early Chinese life in Australia*; *Medicine: The Chinese alternative*; *Not such a secret: Chinese societies and associations (1850s-1986)*; *Reflections of the past — Styles of Chinese homelife*. Different interactive programs with the community include public classes on Chinese culture, guided heritage tours of the area, encouraging the public to bring in personal items for assessment and recording and generally stimulating community interest in the part played by Australian Chinese in Australia's history (Fisher, 1988: 136-7).

*The Polish Hill River Church Museum.* Opened 1988. Located in Sevenhill, Clare, SA, this museum is funded by the Polish community. Its opening was combined with an Annual Polish picnic and renaming of roads with Polish names. The 'main cultural heritage' of Polish settlers was the 'Catholic faith' which is still strong in descendants and also reflected in memorabilia. A draft collecting policy states that the Museum will collect items associated with present and past Polish community and will attempt to document the religious and political reasons for migration (Cmielewski, A. & P., 1989: 19-27).

*Adelaide Lithuanian Museum and Archives.* Opened 1967. The Museum serves as the main depository for Australian Lithuanian material and houses items bought from Lithuania as well as items made in Australia by people of Lithuanian descent. The founders' aim was to help young Australian Lithuanians become familiar with their history and culture and its current mission is to 'collect, preserve and display items relating to Lithuania. To increase knowledge and understanding of Lithuanian history and culture, both that of Lithuania and concerning Lithuanians in Australia'.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

*Access Galleries.* Access gal-
leries in mainstream museums is
one of the major means by which
these museums may serve ethnic
communities who do not have
their own exhibition spaces. As
evidence of the interest of ethnic
communities in displaying
material culture, and their role in
Australia, the Migration Museum,
since opening its community ac-
cess gallery, the Forum, in 1987,
has hosted the following exhibi-
tions mounted by ethnic community
groups:

> *Serbs Down Under* — Serbian Or-
> thodox Church
>
> *Hungary and Her People*, — Coun-
> cil of Hungarian Associations
>
> *Byelorussion National Artefacts* —
> Byelorussian Society in SA
>
> *Ukranian Embraidery in Sauth
> Austrolia* — Ukranian Women's As-
> sociation
>
> *The Sorbs (Wends) of Lusotio:
> Australio's Unknown Immigronts* —
> Australia-German Democratic
> Republic Friendship Society
>
> *Poles in Australio* — Federation of
> Polish Organisations in SA
>
> *Croft Exhibition of Narth European
> Immigronts: Examples af Past ond
> Present Wark* — Adelaide Latvian
> and Multinational Artists Association
>
> *The Austrolio-Chino Friendship
> Society* — The Australia-China
> Friendship Society
>
> *Clogs and Windmills* — Dutch Cul-
> tural Council
>
> *Cantemporary Lithuanion Book
> Plates* — Multicultural Artworkers
> Committee
>
> *Lithuanians Alive* — Australian
> Lithuanian Cultural Society
>
> *Naya Desh (New Hameland)* — The
> Indian Australian Association of SA
>
> *Vietnamese Peaple: Their History
> and Culture* — Vietnamese Com-
> munity in Australia SA Chapter
>
> *Greek Handicraft Traditians: The Personal Treasures
> af Adelaide's Greek Wamen* — Greek Women's Hand-
> icraft Co-operative
>
> *From the Past inta the Future: Latvian Handcrafts in
> Sauth Australia* — Adelaide Latvian Arts and Crafts
> Group
>
> *Retoining Estonia's Cultural Heritoge* — The Adelaide
> Estonian Society Inc.
>
> *Threads af a Cultural Cloth: America 5000 Years* —
> Australian Spanish Latin American Institute Inc.



FIG. 8. *Lithuanians Alive*. Section of an exhibition mounted in *The Forum*
(the Migration Museum's access gallery) by the Australian Lithuanian
Cultural Society. (Photo courtesy of the Migration Museum).

> *Folk Art of Poland* — Pol-Art (Federation of Polish
> Organisations)
>
> *Wherever there's a Mine ...* — Cornish Assoc. of SA;
> (Source: MigratioNews, 1992).

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

Agreements between mainstream museums
and culture-specific museums and/or historical
societies indicate a new direction being taken by
some institutions. O'Brien (1991) identified two
models for handling multiculturalism in

FIG. 9. *My homeland.* Section of an exhibition mounted by Pol Art in *The Forum* (the Migration Museum's access gallery). (Photo courtesy of the Migration Museum).

group and the institution benefit from the arrangement.

Exhibitions that have been the product of partnership agreements such as these have already been described above. The Museum of Victoria's current agreements with ethnic communities include:

1, A Cultural Agreement with the Italian Historical Society to enable the Museum and the Society to share existing resources and expertise by establishing a strategic plan for the preservation of cultural material identified with Italian migration and settlement in Victoria.

2, A Partnership Agreement with the Jewish Museum of Australia and the Italian Historical Society to develop a joint exhibition project. This agreement allows the Jewish Museum, and the Italian Historical Society, to bring into the Museum of Victoria knowledge and expertise about their respective communities. In return, the Museum provides both communities access to its wide public forum.

3, A Proposed Policy of Co-operation with the Polish Community. The purpose of this is to avoid competition where the Museum's collecting practices might overlap with those of community-based organisations. It also establishes a co-operative relationship whereby the museum can support and accommodate community needs whilst enabling the communities to inform and help direct the Museum's collection-based activities.

museums: the Institutional model, and the Assistance model. Under the former, public institutions take responsibility for the collection and development of cultural heritage of diverse groups. With the second model, the community groups build collections outside mainstream bodies but receive guidance from public institutions. An alternative is the Partnership arrangement where the society or group collects and documents material and then deposits it with the institution. This paradigm ensures that both the community

TOURING EXHIBITIONS

*Greek-Australians: In Their Own Image.* This photographic exhibition challenged stereotyping to provide 'a rounder, more complex and detailed, social, cultural and historical image of Greek-Australians' and 'to stimulate critical constructive comment as a basis for assessment and review'. It aimed to de-emphasise existing

FIG. 10. *Walking into the Ghetto*. Cement fondu relief by Thomas Greguss. Jewish Museum, Sydney. (Photo courtesy of the Jewish Museum).

stereotypes within clusters of various occupations and socio-cultural activities today and in the past, and to compare Greek-Australians with their counterparts in Greece. Three inter-related perspectives were chosen from which to view Greek-Australians: 'By viewing and relating to the exhibition, the Greek community has absorbed the historical significance of their lives, and those of their forebears, and has understood the need to preserve private documents, photographs and individual recollections'. Public interaction with the exhibition was encouraged to develop a constantly evolving display. At the same time, the exhibition was also injected with local Greek colour from the centre or region in which it was hosted (Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1989).

Exhibitions like *Greek-Australians* have become more viable with the introduction, in 1993, of the Federal Government's program for touring exhibitions, *Visions of Australia*. This program aims to increase access to a wider range of cultural material by assisting touring of exhibitions to regional and remote areas throughout Australia.

OVERSEAS MUSEUMS

Concerns about cultural diversity are increasing in many countries. In the introduction to *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (1991) the 1990's was cited as an 'historical moment' for the United States in respect to multicultural and intercultural issues with groups 'attempting to establish and maintain a sense of community and to assert their social, political, and economic claims in the larger world'. This rising tide of contestation over representation and the barriers and constraints of museum traditions were noted.

> Groups attempting to establish and maintain a sense of community and to assert their social, political and economic claims in the larger world challenge the right of established institutions to control the presentation of their cultures. They challenge exhibitions that overlap with their concerns, demand real power within existing institutions and establish alternative institutions. Inevitably, even those curators and museum directors who respond to these concerns find themselves in difficult territory, fearful of the passion of the debates and often insufficiently aware of the unconscious assumptions that underlie their own exhibitions. Their efforts, moreover, are compromised by the complex interactions of competing parties and interests that exist in any museum.' (Karp & Lavine, 1991: 2-3).

As another settler society, the United States has also undergone the experience of mass migration, albiet on a different scale and under vastly different conditions. Despite these differences in migrant experiences and a previous commitment to the 'melting pot' ethos, the emergence of multiculturalism invites comparisons of museum responses between the two countries.

*Ellis Island Immigration Museum, New York.* Opened 1990, Ellis Island was once the gateway through which over 12 million men, women and children entered the United States. In the early 1980s work was started to transform this neglected national monument into a museum of immigration. The Ellis Island Immigration Museum opened with exhibition rooms, theatres, oral history archive, library and a Wall of Honor bearing the names of more than 150,000 immigrants from 94 countries. The immigration centre's Registry Room (also called the Great Hall), through which up to 5,000 per day were

FIG. 11. *Sabbath in the Jewish home*. Jewish Museum, Sydney. (Photo courtesy of the Jewish Museum).

museums in the United States, she noted that between 1950 and 1980 over 90 African American museums were established and suggests these were born from an 'enormously complex welter of cultural expression, debate, and critique' involved with the civil rights movement. Although the black power movement was initially concerned with citizenship rights, movement activism moved on to address political economic, social and cultural rights. (Ruffins, 1992: 557). Black museums, often founded by activists involved in labour movement, the arts, or cultural areas, became expressions of the politics of culture and some of the most notable are detailed below.

*Anacostia Neighbourhood Museum (a branch of the Smithsonian Institute).* This has become one of the most well-known black museums. At the opening in 1967, Dr S. Dillon Ripley, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, prophetically proclaimed:

For this is no ordinary museum ... it speaks more eloquently than I can say of the devotion, imagination, and the plain hard work of the Anacostia community ... Together, we must continue to explore the seemingly limitless possibilities that this discovery calls out to us. I suspect that museums will never be quite the same again, and perhaps our cities won't either. (Kinard & Nighbert, 1972: 108).

Under the directorship of John Kinard, this museum became a world-wide model of a museum that aimed to enfranchise its community, and enable its community members to talk about their lives and start to take responsibility for their futures. The area of Anacostia, Washington, was predominantly black, with some middle class and professional residents and a large proportion of welfare recipients. Kinard's program focused on drawing the community to become involved in planning of the museum's operations, exhibitions and programs, and on the involvement of young people — as volunteers, office aides, docents and undertaking projects of their own (Gaither, 1992: 56-65 and Kinard & Nighbert, 1972: 103-108). Some of the outstanding exhibitions mounted at the Anacostia Museum have been:

*This is Africa.* A display of the art and culture of various African countries with African students acting as docents.

processed, has been restored to how it would have appeared during 1918 to 1924 — the peak period of immigration into America. However, the Great Hall holds no exhibits. It has been left empty so as to trigger memory and imagination. Permanent displays in the Museum cover the 'Peopling of America', the admission procedures, an overview of the migrant journey from native to adopted home, the story of Ellis Island and its restoration, and a collection of artefacts brought by immigrants to their new home. As well, visitors have access to hundreds of taped reminiscences in the oral history collections. Oral reminiscences in videos, sound and transcripts of interviews, artefacts and displays are used to place Ellis Island in a wider context and to ask why people left their homelands and what life was like in the new home, as well as examining the evolution of communities. Ellis Island is significant as both a site of pilgrimage (with approximately 40% of Americans able to trace an ancestor who arrived through this facility), a national monument, and a popular museum (Perks, 1992; Allen, 1990; Shapiro, 1992).

*Black museums in United States.* These museums represent what Ruffins has identified as an 'internal' perspective. In reviewing 'black'

*The Sage of Anacostia.* An exhibition on the life and times of Frederick Douglass, a black leader and anti slave campaigner, with information on slavery and events leading to the Civil War, the War itself and aftermath.

*Black Patriots of the American Revolution.* This exhibition told the story of black Americans, slaves and free people, who participated in the War of Independence.

*Lorton Reformatory: Beyond Time.* An exhibition of paintings and handicrafts from reform institution, and photographs of reform life.

*... Toward Freedom.* A review of the Civil Rights movements focussing on education, public accommodations and voting rights.

*The Rat — Man's Invited Affliction.* A display about rat infestations in Anacostia and eradication programs. This exhibition had both local and international attention and showed that museums now had to deal with everyday realities and issues of their local communities. (Source: Kinard, 1972: 103-108).

Other notable museums emerging out of the black museum movement include:

1, Ebony Museum of Negro Culture (now the Du Sable Museum), Chicago (1961).

2, San Francisco Afro-American Historical Society (1956). A museum founded by a group of trade unionists.

3, Museum of Afro-American History, Beacon Hill, Boston (1959) Developed from the Afro-American Historical Society of Boston which was a product of a politically active wing of the liberal Christian church.

4, Museum of Afro-American History, Detroit (1965). Established by activist involved with Southern civil rights movement.

5, National Centre of Afro-American Artists, Boston (1968). An initiative of Elma Lewis, a dance teacher who was influenced by politico-cultural debates of the 1930s and 40s, and first Director, Edmund Barry Gaither, a spokesperson for black artists.

6, Minneapolis Afro-American History and Art Museum (1970s). A group of black artists started to exhibit and hold art classes then added a community-based directorship and later artefact collection.

7, Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum, Philadelphia (1976). By the mid 1970s, the political climate enabled this museum to be established with the assistance of black political power and government support.

8, Rhode Island Black Heritage Society (1975). Founded by a social worker and teacher.

Central issues for these Afro-American museums have been the empowerment of minority communities. Concerns about preserving particular ethnic heritages has, more often than not, been a secondary development. As Ruf-

fins observed, many of these started as cultural centres with a mandate from their communities for 'positive education'. Performances, art exhibitions and classes were often the primary activities. In many cases the collection of documents, photographs and artefacts was a later initiative (Ruffins, 1992: 567). This pattern of museum development differs from the Australian context where the primary driving force behind the move to preserve ethnic culture in Australia has been the realisation that traditions and heritage will be 'lost', that the 'cultural keepers' are ageing and their knowledge and experiences will die with them. Within the growing debate about citizenship, governments have taken up concerns expressed by community groups and incorporated these into the concept of extending citizenship rights into the sphere of culture.

## FUTURE PROSPECTS

Policies already being developed and adopted can be enhanced at both government and institutional levels. Culture-specific organisations are calling for consultative processes to be written into policy documents and to he effected across different levels of institutions. As numerous commentators have stated, and as the 'Plan for Cultural Heritage Institutions' clearly asserts, changing their collecting and representational practices will not ensure that museums adequately reflect and respond to a multicultural presence. They also need to address issues such as access to heritage material, representation on management bodies, the collection and display of materials in languages other than English, and to develop a level of consultation between institutions and community groups. In the following section we review some of the proposals and projects currently under consideration which might help address these issues.

POLICY AREA

Commitments to multiculturalism have to be better resourced from government bodies, but, at the same time, institutions can go a long way themselves toward meeting these demands within existing hudgeting frameworks hy incorporating ethnic considerations firstly, as a fundamental policy, and, secondly, into all aspects of their activities. More specific policy considerations need to be directed at collecting practices, funding, and, most importantly, community consultation.

*Collections.* At a national level there is a need to establish policies that will ensure funds are

made available for ethnic heritage material in respect to collections acquisition, management, conservation and research. Here the emphasis should be on collections rather than the collecting body. This was the strategy adopted by the Heritage Collections Working Group when it set out to define the nature and extent of Australia's heritage collections and to recommend means of improving community access to this heritage. The Group proposed that this need would be best met by the concept of a 'dispersed national collection' in which the national heritage is represented by a collection distributed amongst many institutions and managed through a co-operative network.

At an institutional level, a submission to the Office of Multicultural Affairs from the 1988 'New Responsibilities' conference, made the following recommendations in respect to collections.

1. Collections Base

Institutional collecting policies must be developed to encourage collecting which adequately reflects cultural diversity. This must be supported by active field work which utilises bilingual and bicultural staff and will result in positive benefits in terms of increased community awareness of, and participation in, the institution.

2. Ownership and Access

Cultural institutions remain under a continuing obligation to recognise issues of ownership, copyright and access in respect of material and intellectual property that is donated or acquired. There must be an acknowledgement of differing cultural attitudes towards issues of ownership. The diverse nature of private and community-based collections necessitates a variety of approaches to issues of ownership, responsibility and resourcing. In particular, acknowledgement should be made of the legitimacy and significance of extra-mural collections: a major institution [and smaller institutions also] may resource such collections without assuming ownership.

3. Collections Management

3.1 Material from overseas

Collections of overseas material purchased to represent an overseas culture should not be used as a surrogate for the development of collections reflecting the multicultural experience in Australia.

3.2 Language

Bilingual staff should be available to register and catalogue material.

Appropriate technology should be obtained to meet multilingual requirements.

3.3 Reassessment of Existing Holdings

There is a need to reassess existing holdings (which may presently be catalogued in only one context) for their multicultural significance.

3.4 Conservation

Conservation techniques are of crucial importance for the maintenance of historical collections.

The role of major cultural institutions in giving advice on conservation to communities and private collectors is vital. (Birtley & McQueen, 1989: 140-148).

*Funding.* An expansion of the recurrent grant system (budget subsidies) to ethnic community museums through Federal, State or Local Government funding would greatly assist many museums. Although various forms of general museum accreditation systems have been set up (in Western Australia and South Australia), recommended (Victoria), or proposed (Queensland), more recognition is needed in such schemes to accommodate the special purposes of culture-specific museums, i.e. the servicing of specific community cultural needs. For example, the Italian Historical Society, Victoria, which collects, researches, publishes and manages a collection, provides research facilities for students and the public and also meets specific cultural needs of the Italian community is excluded from many sources of government funding because it does not have exhibition space or display facilities.

*Community involvement and consultation.* Although it has been advocated in many platform statements, there is still a failure by many institutions to ensure policy development is done in consultation with culture-specific groups and/or representatives of ethnic communities such as the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA), Ethnic Communities' Councils (ECC), Ethnic Affairs Commission (EAC). A positive example of a museum moving in this direction is the Australian Museum's commitment to report to the EAC on the progress of the Museum's multicultural strategies (Corporate strategy, 1990-92). Other policy areas where there is a potential for enhancement of a multicultural agenda for museums are:

1, Equal Employment Opportunities. While major museums are now introducing EEO programs, there is a long way to go towards cultural diversity in decision-making positions in museums, funding sources etc. A useful step might be for funding authorities to require a monitoring of progress through museum performance indicators (e.g. Australian War Memorial, Australian Museum, Powerhouse Museum;

2, Research activities. Some of the ways in which research activities and museum output may be more productively employed to achieve multicultural agendas is by more thoroughly linking the findings of research activities of museums, ethnic communities and historical societies. More specifically:

- There is a need for closer ties between tertiary institutions, research into the history of ethnic groups, and museums;

- Ethnicity studies in tertiary institutions could include general museology studies; and

- Museums could draw more extensively upon the output of academic research on multicultural issues on which to base museum displays; and

3, Networking. Other collecting institutions are increasingly becoming involved with collecting with the material culture of ethnic groups in Australia (libraries, archives, historical societies). Establishing policies that enable the appropriate institutional structures and frameworks, and encouraging inter- institutional networks could result in more co-operative projects such as the joint venture exhibitions mounted by the Italian Historical Association and the Victorian Public Library and the partnership agreements which the Museum of Victoria is pioneering.

THROUGH COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Various models for speaking to different ethnic peoples and for involving ethnic communities (and individuals) have been described in the foregoing sections. In order to present a more multicultural face to the public through their public programs, exhibitions, and outreach activities, museums can implement or increase the involvement of communities at all points of exhibition and program development, use volunteer guides from ethnic communities with cross-cultural and bi-lingual skills, and encourage more co-operative and joint arrangements with ethnic communities. Museums might also introduce the use of languages other than English in labelling, texts, brochures and museum guides. As already described, the encouragment of community participation through access galleries is gaining favour. In a recent survey of access galleries, Madeleine Galbraith looked at the different levels of access in various institutions. Her survey reveals the overwhelming pattern was for museums to direct exhibitions mounted in their access spaces. The only museums listed as allowing for community directed exhibitions were the Queensland Museum, the museums of the South Australian History Trust (Migration Museum and Old Parliament House), the Western Australian Museum and several smaller institutions: the Museum of Chinese Australian History, National Wool Museum, Mirrigum and District Historical Society and the Griffith Pioneer Park Museum. Art galleries or craft centres were much more likely to allow community-directed exhibitions which indicates either a stronger presence of a multicultural agenda in the arts areas in response to ethnic arts workers or the fact that art galleries

have demonstrated a greater openness, over a longer period, to a multicultural presence than have museums (Galbraith, 1993: 10).

A shift from 'object centredness' to 'community or people centred' approaches in respect to the activities of museums is a strategy that could be more fruitfully used in establishing strong relationships between museums and their communities. It would also go a long way to changing institutional attitudes. Edmund Barry Gaither described a five-step collecting procedure adopted by museum director, Rowena Stewart, for the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society and for the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum at Philadelphia (Gaither, 1992:61-62). The model provides for a people-centred, rather than artefact-centred approach to collecting, where the 'artefact holder' is the key element in the collecting process. The procedure is:

Step 1. Museum staff visit person/s identified as having some historical knowledge or having possession of an interesting object. Time is spent, often several visits, to tell the 'keeper' about the museum and develop confidence in the museum and for the 'keeper' to acquire confidence in the value of his/her own knowledge.

Step 2. Museum worker encourages the 'keeper' to interpret his/her knowledge or objects to a small group of family of friends.

Step 3. Professional historian is brought into the project to provide a wider historical context.

Step 4. Preparation of exhibition, termed 'giving the material back to the community'. 'Keeper' now has the opportunity to share experiences or knowledges with the wider community at large.

Step 5. Education plan and publication. This records the objects of knowledge and their complete interpretation. Posssibly the original 'keeper' acts as docent and shares experience directly with public.

This model involves both a team and consultative approach; an approach which encourages people to value their heritage and culture and thence share their experiences and knowledge with the wider community.

GUIDE TO KEY SOURCES

ANDREONI, Helen 1992. Outside the gum tree — The visual arts in multicultural Australia. Multiculturalism has been more extensively covered in the area of arts and arts policy, much of which can be extrapolated and applied to museums. Andreoni's report for the National As-

sociation of Visual Arts (NAVA) is a useful report with implications for museums.

ARTLINK, 1991. Special issue on Multiculturalism. Articles pertinent to multiculturalism and museums include papers by Olwen Ford (Living Museum of the West), James Jupp (Australian culture and the nature of Australian identity,) Amareswar Galla (cultural diversity in museums and the need for heritage training) and articles on multiculturalism in the arts in general.

ARTLINK, 1992. Special issue on Museums. Most pertinent are papers by Claudine Brown (Cultural diversity and the challenge of access), Viv Szekeres (Exhibiting conflict — who dares?), Shar Jones (Local museums and access), Helen Andreoni (Aboriginal and multicultural policy) and a section on New Zealand which is of interest in comparing different approaches.

BIRTLEY, Margaret & Patricia McQUEEN (eds) 1989. New Responsibilities: Documenting Multicultural Australia. This is a record of the 1988 Conference for Museums, Libraries, Archives and Historical Collections from which policy options for a National Agenda for a Multicultural Australia were sought. Papers cover specific museum displays, collection issues, service delivery, the role of state institutions and Conference proposals for a national agenda. The volume also includes a summary of a survey of multicultural collections that gives an indication of holdings of ethnic cultural heritage held in those institutions at that time.

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO FOLKLIFE IN AUSTRALIA 1987. Folklife: Our Living Heritage. This was an outcome of an inquiry set up in 1986 to examine the nature, diversity and significance of Australian folklife, the existing institutional and other arrangements for safeguarding folklife in Australia (with regard to collections, documentation, conservation, dissemination, etc) and to recommend measures for ensuring the future of folklife.

COOK, Glen & Jerzy ZUBRZYCKI 1992. Migrant Heritage — A Guide to the Collections, National Museum of Australia. An annotated list of items in the National Museum of Australia to June 1991. The guide also includes a chapter on the strengths and weaknesses of the national collection of migrant heritage and an appendix that details historical and cultural contexts of several significant collections in the areas of Migrant women workers, the boat people, housing for immigrants and chain migration.

COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM ASSOCIATIONS Inc. 1991. Australian Museums —

Collecting and Presenting Australia. Proceedings of the CAMA Conference, Canberra, 1990. A number of papers from this conference make specific reference to multicultural collections and representations. Jerzy Zubrzycki discusses the intellectual difficulties involved in developing collecting policies to reflect cultural diversity while Viv Szekeres reviews the origins of culture-specific museums and summarises the challenges they face. Ilma O'Brien looks at various ways major public institutions may take responsibility for collecting and presenting the cultural heritage of diverse groups whilst Helen Light describes the role of the Jewish Museum, stressing the importance of the Museum and other culture-specific museums in the fostering of understanding between mainstream society and specific cultural groups.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARTS, SPORT, ENVIRONMENT, TOURISM AND TERRITORIES 1991. A Plan for Cultural Heritage Institutions to Reflect Australia's Cultural Diversity. The Plan sets out guidelines for collecting institutions to enable them to more adequately reflect cultural diversity and redress historical and existing biases. The document stresses the need for long-term and overall alteration of awareness about the nature of Australian society by raising the level of consciousness within institutions and, through their activities, within the wider community.

FISHER, Wendy 1988. A brief description of the Museum of Chinese Australian History in Melbourne's Chinatown. She describes the background to its establishment and gives an overview of function, displays and future objectives.

FUSSELL, Angela 1991. Fussell argues that museums should adopt anti-racist collecting strategies by: consultation and dialogue between museums and communities; mounting representative collections that include ethnic material; and interpreting material to show ethnic community history in the context of broader histories.

GALLA, Amareswar 1993. Galla argues that museums have a critical role in psychological decolonisation and the construction of positive preferred futures through community cultural development. He offers a series of recommendations addressed to various bodies covering training in cross-cultural heritage management to more adequately recognise and reflect cultural diversity. Arguing that training and education are critical factors in promoting cultural diversity in heritage institutions, Galla discusses in-house training, tertiary education and training, community-

based cultural conservation and training and ways in which heritage curricula and cultural diversity may be co-ordinated and further developed.

JUPP, James 1990. Jupp details the various arguments and perspectives on migration and reviews the literature on migration whilst arguing for better resourcing for immigration studies.

JUPP, James (ed.) 1988. A Bicentennial publication which provides an overview of the origins of Australians. It deals with the different periods of settlement; offers a comprehensive set of essays on Australian Aborigines; provides extensive details of settlers from every country around the world from the major source countries of England, Germany, New Zealand and the Asian countries, to those making the smallest contribution in respect to population numbers, such as Tibetans, Icelanders, and Pitcairners; and reviews policy issues concerning immigrants and immigration ranging from ageing to welfare provisions.

KARP, Ivan & Steven D. LAVINE (eds) 1991. A companion volume to Museums and Communities, (see below) but with the focus on how cultural diversity is collected, exhibited and managed in museums, fairs, and folk festivals. The work exemplifies current debates in the United States occasioned by the need for greater pluralism in museum displays as the 'melting pot' concept is increasingly discredited. The various case studies discuss problems experienced by exhibitionary institutions in accommodating alternative perspectives, and in an introductory essay Lavine and Karp propose a number of strategies to achieve this objective.

KARP, Ivan, Christine Mullen KREAMER & Steven D. LAVINE (eds) 1992. The underlying theme of this volume is that museum displays can be understood as expressions of the power of representation: that is, the power to classify and define peoples and societies, to represent ideas and belief structures, and to distinguish norms and differences. At the same time, museums can also be places for challenging representations. The essays provide examples of museums that are opening up to new audiences or communities asserting their rights to representation. Chapters most pertinent to this study include: Edmund Barry Gaither's discussion on pluralism and American museums; Alicia Gonzales and Edith Tonelli's account of the museum processes involved in an exhibition of Chicano art; Jane Peirson Jones's description of a new anthropology exhibition at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery where the brief was to take up multicultural

issues specific to the city; and Fath Davis Ruffins's study of the development of the black museum movement in the United States.

MARTIN, A.W. 1987. Martin provides an overview of immigration and post-war government policies, detailing changing patterns and political and social factors influencing policy direction.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM 1987. Margaret Anderson discusses the problems and challenges museums must overcome in representing multiculturalism, in particular: the tendency to whig interpretations of history, a celebratory approach that can mask ongoing racism and prejudices, and the danger of superficiality. Andrew Reeves discusses working-class culture and museum collections. Kimberley Webber writes on historical collections and their development as 'national monuments'.

WINTERNITZ, Judy 1991. During the 1988 Bicentennial Historic Records Search for paper-based material in private hands, the Office of Multicultural Affairs co-operated with the National Library of Australia to locate material relating to the experiences of people of non- English speaking backgrounds. The Office extended its activities to also locate, document and photograph examples of material culture held outside public institutions. A number of images, selected for this publication, are arranged in four categories — needlework/clothing/textiles, jewellery, pottery/china/metalware, and objects of everyday life. An introductory essay raises questions about interpretational principles and some ethical questions about the whole issue of heritage collections.

ZUBRZYCKI, Jerzy 1992. Professor Zubrzycki was commissioned by the National Museum to develop a conceptual framework for the Museum to fulfil its mandate to interpret Australia's ethnic heritage and to provide guidance on collection and interpretation strategies. Zubrzycki probes goals and philosophical principles involved in collecting, organising, cataloguing and presentation, and the exhibition of ethnic heritage material. In so doing, he also provides a model for other collecting institutions.

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